



FEBRUARY  
2012

SOUTH CAROLINA  
ACCESS TO  
JUSTICE



PURSUING ACCESS TO CIVIL JUSTICE FOR ALL SOUTH CAROLINIANS

## **Director's Corner**

On January 31, 2012, the South Carolina Access to Justice Commission passed its FIVE year anniversary, noting that 5 years ago, the Supreme Court of South Carolina established the Access to Justice Commission.

We're still deliberating the best way to celebrate. In the meantime, if you have a favorite memory about the Commission, I'd love to hear from you.



Needless to say, it's a busy time for the SC Access to Justice Commission. Our January 2012 meeting was successful, and we participated in the South Carolina Bar Foundation's GALA during the SC Bar Convention in Columbia, and recently hosted 76 interpreters from across the state at "**Law School for Interpreters**" on Saturday, February 11, 2012.

We're continuing to work on several SRL resource projects:

- Probate Court: Guardian, Guardianship, and Ward FAQs: funded by the Administration on Aging, Lieutenant Governor's Office
- Family Court: 2 issues in Family Court with 2 different partner entities:
  - HotDocs— A Document Assembly program for the Divorce Packet with SC Legal Services through a Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Technology Initiative Grant (TIG)

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# Chief Justice Toal Delivers State of the Judiciary

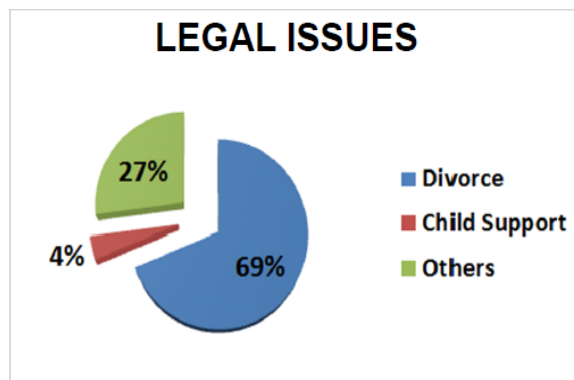
At 12:00 noon on February 8, 2012, Chief Justice Jean Hoefer Toal delivered her annual State of the Judiciary address to a joint session of the General Assembly. On Slide 13 of 17 (below), she noted the success of the Newberry County Self-Help Center Pilot Program.

To see the full presentation, click <http://sccourts.org/whatsnew/SOJ2012/SOJPowerPoint.pdf>.

For the archived video presentation, click <http://www.sccourts.org/caseofmonth/soj2012.wmv>.



- Goal of this program is to provide legal information and resources to people who cannot afford an attorney
- Since July 2011 when the center opened and began providing office hours one day per month:
  - ❖ Over 50 clients served
    - 98% lacked attorney representation
    - A majority of these clients had household incomes less than \$21,500



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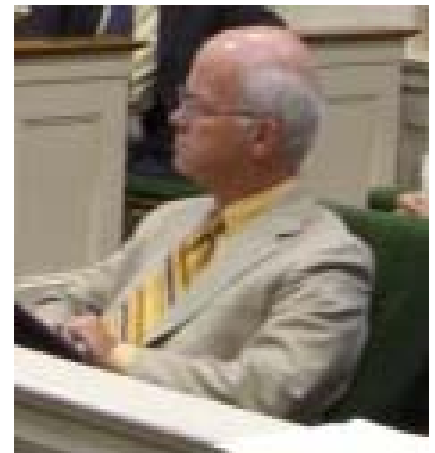
- Child Support Modification - Developing Forms, FAQs, Videos, and other resources for SRLs with SC Center for Fathers and Families through a grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services
- FAQs for LEP Individuals including How to Request a Court Interpreter

If you're interested in serving on these workgroups OR have ideas for other FAQs or SRL resource development, please call me at (803) 576-3808 or email me at [rwheeler@scbar.org](mailto:rwheeler@scbar.org).



Stephanie A. Nye, Counsel to  
Chief Justice Jean Hofer Toal

**The South Carolina Access to  
Justice Commission  
congratulates  
Stephanie A. Nye  
and  
Thomas L. Bruce**



Thomas L. Bruce, General Counsel,  
South Carolina Legal Services

## **2012 Compleat *Lawyer Awards***

South Carolina Access to Justice has two close ties to the recent announcement of the 2012 Compleat Lawyer Awards. Both **Stephanie A. Nye**, Counsel to Chief Justice Jean Hofer Toal, and **Thomas L. Bruce**, General Counsel, South Carolina Legal Services, have been recognized for their professional achievement and civic leadership. Ms. Nye and Mr. Bruce will be recognized at the USC School of Law's annual alumni dinner April 19, 2012 at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

## ***What's happening with SRLs in South Carolina?***

The SRL Committee is looking into expanding the Self-Help Center pilot program into an additional county. On March 2, 2012, Stephanie Nye and Robin Wheeler will spend a day in Lexington County Family Court, meeting with court personnel and observing SRL hearings.

If the Family Court Judges and the Clerk of Court are interested in this expansion, the Commission will consider other factors. If it appears to be a good collaboration, we will open discussions with both the Lexington County and Richland County Bars to begin to recruit volunteer attorneys to staff the Center. From initial conversations with the University of South Carolina Pro Bono Program, it appears that law students will be available to help staff the Center and assist the volunteer attorneys.

The Commission also submitted a 2-page Concept Paper to the State Justice Institute (SJI) for a Mobile Justice Incubator Grant. This was a popular opportunity providing funding for innovative ways to increase access to Self-Represented Litigants. The unique draw was that this was the first time that Access to Justice Commissions and others were permitted to submit requests. From conversations with others, we learned that many states are competing for limited funding. According to the SJI website, the Board will make its decision by the end of April 2012.

Stay tuned . . . .



## ***The State of Pro Bono in South Carolina***

During the end of February and early March, the SC Bar Foundation will be meeting with grantee organizations to discuss ways to improve pro bono delivery and increase pro bono participation within South Carolina.

If you have suggestions for the Commission, the Pro Bono Committee would love to hear from you. Please contact the Pro Bono Committee Chair, George Cauthen at [george.cauthen@nelsonmullins.com](mailto:george.cauthen@nelsonmullins.com) or by phone at (803) 255-9425 OR Robin Wheeler at [rwheeler@scbar.org](mailto:rwheeler@scbar.org) or by phone at (803) 576-3808.

## ***Law School for Interpreters: A Success***

On Saturday, February 11, 2012, the LEP Work Group sponsored “Law School for Interpreters” at the SC Bar Conference Center at 1501 Park Street in Columbia in the hopes of attracting more interpreters to participate in the South Carolina State Court Interpreter Program. Seventy-seven registrants paid \$35.00 for a full day of training, costs included breakfast, lunch, and materials.

The Agenda:

- Registration and Breakfast 8:00 a.m.
- Welcome & Overview 8:45 a.m.
- Pretest 9:00 a.m.
- “Oh the Places You Can Go and the People You Can Meet” (Overview of the SC Judicial System) 9:15 a.m.
- South Carolina State Court Interpreter Certification Program 9:45 a.m.
- BREAK
- Circuit Court 10:30 a.m.
- Family Court 11:15 a.m.
- Magistrates Court 12:00 noon
- Catered Lunch
- Court Process 1:45 p.m.
- BREAK
- Panel Discussion & Q&A: Reality Check 3:15 p.m.
- Post-test, Wrap-Up, & Evaluation 4:45 p.m.

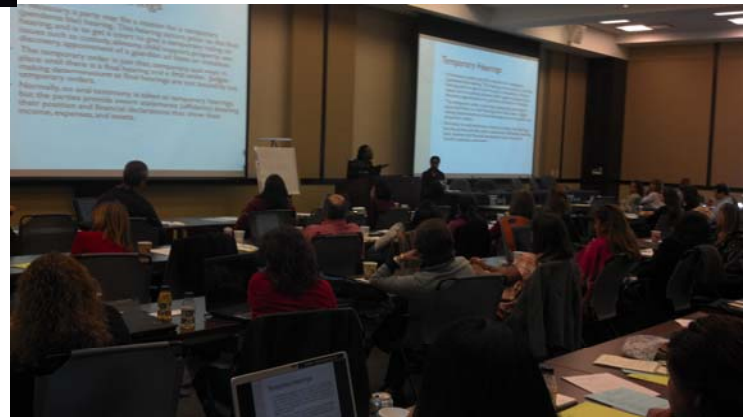
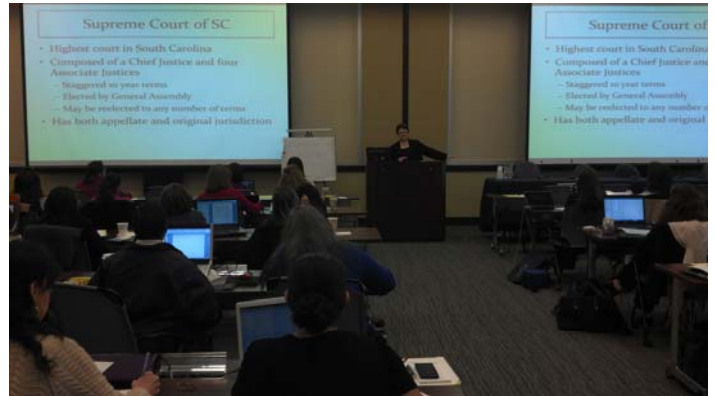
The response from the participants has been positive and we’ve even had contacts asking us when the next offering will be held. The LEP Work Group is going to meet in March (date tba) to discuss next steps.

### Sponsors:

Catholic Charities Diocese of Charleston Immigration Office, Comunicar, SC Access to Justice Commission, SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center, SC Bar Pro Bono Program, SC Commission for Minority Affairs, SC Court Administration, SCCADVA-SA, SC Association of Interpreters and Translators (SCAIT), NAJIT, SC DSS, SC Legal Services, SC School for the Deaf and Blind, SC Immigrant Victim Network and SC Victim Assistance Network , SC Bar Foundation, Administration on Aging, Lt. Governor’s Office on Aging, Model Approaches Grant



# Law School for Interpreters Saturday, February 11, 2012



# **SC Access to Justice Commission Calendar of Events:**

## **February 2012**

- 23 - South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families FAQs Group meet
- 29 - Pro Bono Conversations with the South Carolina Bar Foundation

## **March 2012**

- 2 - Lexington County Courthouse, Observe SRLs
- 7 - Newberry County Self-Help Center
- 13 - Magistrates Training
- 14 - South Carolina Child Support Modification Update meeting
- 19 - Administration on Aging (HHS), Lt. Governors Office on Aging, Model Approaches Grant Partners meeting
- 29 - Group Conversation, Pro Bono Conversations with the South Carolina Bar Foundation
- 30 - Briefcase Lawyer CLE Presentation

## **April 2012**

- 4 - Newberry County Self-Help Center
- 19 - Compleat Lawyer Awards Dinner
- 27 - Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc. "Celebrating Abilities, An Evening of Jazz and Art"

## **May 2012**

- 2 - Newberry County Self-Help Center
- 16 - 19 - Equal Justice Conference, Jacksonville, FL

## **June 2012**

- 6 - Newberry County Self-Help Center
- 19 - South Carolina Access to Justice Commission meeting

Robin F. Wheeler, Executive Director  
South Carolina Access to Justice Commission  
PO Box 608  
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-0608  
(803) 576-3808 Fax (803) 799-5290  
Email: [rwheeler@scbar.org](mailto:rwheeler@scbar.org)